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Essays, Expositions, &c.

SACRIFICE.—ITS PRINCIPLE.

We have already endeavoured to show that sacrifice must have originated in the Divine Will. And yet, on the other hand, it is equally true that "it has its ground in something deeper than legal enactments." The statute or ordinance that first enjoined it was not of the order of those "the reason of which we do not see." It was very different from the prohibition given respecting the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil." It was not given simply as a test of obedience. The neglect of it by one man did not necessarily involve a whole race in calamitous consequences. There is no need, therefore, that it should stand out boldly on the face of the record. It would be a grievous misunderstanding to consider it as a statutory enactment requiring nothing on the part of man but mere mechanical action. On the contrary, it implied in its very nature the intelligent and free "consent of the will of man." It implied divine teaching, and a state of mind in accordance with the thing taught. It was a sense of this that led Eusebius to think that the origin of sacrifice might be accounted for apart from any statutory enactment. "Pious persons (he says), who had their minds enlightened by the Divine Spirit, saw that they needed a remedy for deadly sins, and concluded that a ransom for their salvation ought to be presented to God, the disposer of life and death; and having nothing to consecrate to him more valuable than their own lives, they offered the beasts in their stead." It was probably also a sense of this that made Chrysostom suppose that "Cain's sacrifice sprang from a desire to testify the gratitude of his heart to God for the enjoyment of his beneficence." But, though we think these authors might have traced sacrifice to a higher origin, they were doubtless right in considering it as the embodiment of a principle. What is that principle?

There can be no doubt that a loving obedience to God under all circumstances covers the whole field of our duty. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Hence it is that "he that offends in one point is guilty of all." Not that he who once breaks one command is as guilty as he who once breaks each of them in detail. But the principle involved in any one command is precisely the same as that involved in any other, so that if a man disregards the principle involved in any one command, he disregards the principle involved in all the rest, for it is one and the same in all. And so it may be said, in the same sense, that he who keeps one command keeps all the rest, inasmuch as, if a pure love to God and

regard to his authority outweighs all other considerations in regard to any particular course of action, he is animated by that principle which is the spirit and essence of the law, and without which *nothing is acceptable to God.*

But what has this to do with sacrifice? Much every way. It shows its animating principle, and the reason of its acceptance. It shows that it has both a divine and a human side, that it originates in the Divine Will, and is worked out through the enlightenment of the human conscience. It explains why God is pleased with it at one time, and displeased with it at another. One man may bring an offering, with unreserved submission to God and an earnest desire to please him, entreating him to "cleanse the thoughts of his heart by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit," and another may bring the like offering in order to purchase the right to retain a favourite passion, and to escape from unpleasant obligations.

Now, the one thing that God in all ages has required of man is loving obedience. When He placed our first parents in Eden, innocent as they were, he did not say to them, "I have given you so many bodily and mental powers; do with them what you find them adapted for. Consult your tastes, and gratify them. Consult your dispositions, and indulge them." He did not say, "I have written all my laws upon your heart; only listen to the voice that is within you, and obey its mandates." But He said, "Hearken unto my voice. Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden." And when God redeemed his ancient people from Egypt, this was the first message sent them by Moses:—"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will *obey my voice* indeed, and keep my covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me." Accordingly, when they offered sacrifice instead of obedience, God sent his prophet to expostulate with them in these terms:—"I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, *Obey my voice*, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Obedience was what He required of them; and sacrifice, offered as a substitute for it, was always offensive and insulting. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord." *Obedience* is the thing required, and an offering, of whatever kind, that is not animated by the spirit of obedience, is never acceptable to Him. It is as if one should bring to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation a putrid carcase, instead of a living and healthy victim. Hence the value of Abraham's sacrifice. "Because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me, in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed; *because thou hast obeyed my voice.*" And is not the sacrifice of Christ, in one respect of it, an illustration of the same principle? In this sacrifice shines conspicuously the highest obedience of which human nature in its purest and most dignified form is capable—an obedience which every form of horror and the utmost degree of agony only served to bring out into bolder relief. Christ's "*obedience unto death*" was the perfection of his sacrifice, and his sacrifice of himself the crowning point of his obedience. His sacrifice was "a sweet smelling savour" unto God, not simply because it was a sacrifice, but because that sacrifice was the sweetest flower and ripest fruit of obedience, the clearest manifestation of its spirit and life, the evidence of its unlimitedness.

It appears, then, that the sacrifice which is of divine origin is that, and only that, which is offered in the spirit of loving obedience, and doubtless such was the character of the first sacrifice. But the extent of obedience to be rendered is limited according to the nature and circumstances of the creature required to render it. Contrition and penitence are not required of unfallen beings. "A broken and a contrite heart" is out of place in a state of innocence. The sacrifices God appoints for man are such as are appropriate to a fallen condition —"the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,"—and it surely needs no proof that

there is some divine connection between the broken heart and the bleeding victim. This connection is so patent, that Bishop Warburton thonght it sufficient to "lead us to the true *rationale* of the rite of sacrifice." He endeavours to account for the origin of it in the following manner:—"Some chosen animal, precious to the repenting criminal who deprecates or is supposed to be obnoxious to the Deity, was offered up and slain at the altar, in an action which, when translated into words, speaks to this purpose:—'I confess my transgressions at thy footstool, O my God! and with the deepest contrition implore thy pardon, confessing that I deserve death for these my offences; and I own (striking the victim) that I myself deserve the death which I now inflict on this animal.'" We do not think that this "speaking by action," as the bishop terms it, taken in connection with the defects of early language, will account for the origin of the rite; but it seems very clear that the offering of slain victims was intended from the first to embody a confession of sin, and this is in perfect accordance with the whole of the Levitical law. But not only does bloody sacrifice imply the fall of man: it implies also his redemption. It regards him not simply as fallen, nor simply as redeemed, but as at once fallen and redeemed. If it pointed only to man's fall, it would leave no room for contrition on the part of man; if it pointed only to his redemption, it might be nothing more on God's part than a "declaration of peace."

We cannot here enter into the dispute as to "whether the fall or the redemption is the ground on which humanity rests." Suffice it to say, that so far as bloody sacrifice is concerned, they are both equally involved. The offering of such sacrifices implied confession, and the acceptance of them a return of the divine favour. On the one hand, they could meet with no acceptance without a "broken and a contrite heart;" and on the other hand, when true contrition was experienced, the Lord did good in his good pleasure unto Zion, and "*then*" he was "pleased with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering."

On the whole, then, we conclude that the obedience involved in the shedding of blood must be a deeper obedience than that which is required from an innocent being. Sacrifice opens up to view a new field of obedience appropriate to man's condition as fallen and redeemed. This gleams out even in the first-recorded sacrifices. Cain brought of the "fruit of the ground," and Abel "the firstlings of his flocks." Compare these offerings with the terms in which the sentence against man is recorded. "In the *sweat of thy face* shalt thou eat bread till thou *return unto the dust*." Was not Cain's sacrifice the *fruit of toil*, and did not Abel's speak of "*returning to the dust*"? Were not these sacrifices the outward expression of acceptance of the punishment, of submission to an offended Father, and of hope in the promise that the "seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent"?

If this be true, the fall and redemption imply a large augmentation of the divine claims upon us. We are laid under deeper obligations. God requires of us now broken-hearted penitence. He requires of us now nothing short of "obedience unto death." Thus the institution of sacrifice ushers in a new era in the history of man. Before the fall man knew that all his active powers should be dedicated to God's service; but his offering to God of the fruit of the ground, and the blood of slain victims, after the fall, implies an acknowledgment of further obligation, viz.—an obligation to consecrate to God's service his whole being, not only in all its active powers, but also in all its *capabilities of suffering*. It is an acceptance of the curse pronounced, with child-like faith in Him who can turn it into a blessing. The blood of every sacrifice speaks this language. Christ *in us* acknowledges the claim. A hearty recognition of this claim is a well-spring of unutterable bliss. The more extensive God's claims upon the creature, the fuller is the creature's enjoyment when these claims are heartily admitted. Such an admission brings the soul into a beatific union with the God of love—a union, the bonds of which are closer drawn in proportion as a Father's claims deepen and expand.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

No. 3.—Union between Different Denominations.

BY JOHN BROWN, A.M., CONLIG, NEWTOWNARDS, IRELAND.

I have now directed attention to three points, viz.—the union subsisting between Christ and the believer, the union which ought to subsist between the members of a Christian church, and the union which ought to subsist between the churches composing the same ecclesiastical association. Permit me now to add a few words on the union which ought to subsist between Christians of different denominations.

On this subject there is considerable diversity of sentiment among Christians, some sects refusing to hold either ministerial or Christian communion with any other branch of the visible church; while others would merge all differences, and incorporate all denominations into one body. The two most sectarian bodies of Protestants in the kingdom are, I suppose, the Glasites or Sandemanians, and Walkerites or Separatists. Whilst these two bodies hold much divine truth, and, no doubt, some errors in common, yet they decline to hold any religious fellowship with each other, or with any other sect whatever. The Glasites "deem it essential to Christian fellowship that, in the minutest peculiarities, the members should be agreed. In doctrinal matters they do not materially differ from other evangelical Christians. Among their characteristic practices and observances are, the weekly celebration of the Lord's supper—love feasts—the kiss of charity—plurality of bishops, or elders in the congregation—mutual exhortation—the use of the lot—abstinence from things strangled, and blood—and washing the feet of the faithful.* Not only do they hold it unscriptural to join with others in the Lord's supper who reject these peculiarities, but they will neither unite with them in prayer, nor hold any spiritual communion with them whatever. They are good and kind members of society; but, as Christians, they shut themselves up from holding fellowship of any kind, or in any degree, with the other avowed friends of Christ."† I once knew an excellent lady who was excluded from a Glasite church, because she gave a subscription to a Bible Society, that being interpreted as an act of religious fellowship.‡ Both the Glasites and Walkerites admit that there may be disciples scattered among the other sects; but hold that they are not warranted to recognise them as such, until they come out of the religious world, and join the Church of Christ, which, according to the Glasites, is the *Glasite* denomination, and according to the Walkerites, is the *Walkerite* denomination, for neither of these denominations will acknowledge the other as a church of Christ, though there is scarcely a hair's breadth of difference between them, either as it regards faith or practice. Much as I respect both these bodies for their conscientious adherence to the Word of God, I deeply regret their extreme exclusiveness. Such a course may consistently be observed by the Church of Rome, because she pretends to infallibility; but it ill becomes Protestants, who admit that "the purest churches are liable to error." If the image of Christ appear in a man's character, why not acknowledge it, though he may not see eye to eye with us in everything? I should be sorry to ignore or deny the existence of grace, wherever it is visible, whether the subject of it be a Glasite, a Walkerite, or a Roman Catholic, though on the principle of all these bodies they must view me as a heretic.

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* The late excellent Dr. Carson, of Tubbermore, I understand, held the divine obligation of some of these practices, such as weekly communion—mutual exhortation—and the kiss of charity. But though he observed the kiss with those who were of the same mind with himself when the church met on the Lord's Day, he did not, like the Glasites and Walkerites, make it a term of communion.

† Dr. Struthers.

‡ It is said that a difference of opinion once arose in a Glasite church about the propriety of the presiding "elder" handling the elements in the Eucharist before giving thanks, because we read that Christ "took bread and gave thanks," &c.,—some considering this an accidental circumstance not to be imitated, and others looking on it as an essential part of the ordinance. The party who opposed were excluded, and, having become a new sect, were denominated "The *Antilifters*."

The Reformed Presbyterians and original seceders are said to have been very rigid in olden times. Though, I suppose they would not have refused to unite in family worship with Christians of other denominations, like the Walkerites and Glasites, yet it is said that the sin of holding "communion with corrupt churches in occasionally hearing the Word," subjected the offender to public censure. And if the people were forbidden to hear corrupt doctrine, they, of course, would be no less particular in discountenancing corrupt preachers. I have heard of an old Cameronian minister, who, when about to preach in a certain place, was offered a chair to stand upon; but on learning that it had been previously used by an Independent minister, he refused it—as if the doctrine of Independency could stick to the chair! Be this as it may, I am glad to learn, on the authority of the late Dr. Lymington, that the Reformed Presbyterians of the present day are willing to "stand fast on the common ground on which we are all agreed, and by union and coöperation on this ground, without any compromise of peculiar principles," they expect to "be prepared by and by to discuss the points of difference with the prospect of their being gradually transferred to a place among the things on which we are one." That the spirit of the above sentiment has been infused among the Scotch Covenanters, I have ample proof; for I have frequently occupied their pulpits, side by side with their own pastors, and the difference of sentiment, instead of being magnified, seemed to be modified by the connection. Both parties wondered that we were so much alike. This is, I believe, what may be expected, when parties who have viewed each other with prejudice are brought together in a friendly spirit. People are disposed to magnify differences in the heat of controversy and party spirit; but, when they meet as brethren, they see that in many respects they have misunderstood and misrepresented each other, and are glad to find that they are much more agreed than they at one time supposed. As to *occasional hearing*, if a church member were to absent himself from his church, when assembled on the Lord's Day to observe the Lord's supper, I should think him censurable; but, I should think it not only allowable, but a Christian duty, to countenance the preaching of the gospel at other times, however far the preacher might differ on subordinate matters.

But others, in their anxiety to obtain Christian union, go to the opposite extreme. They would be for sinking all differences, and joining all the sects of Christendom into one body. And I readily admit this is the most consistent view of what is called Open Communion. One section of the Baptists, for example, plead that all believers should be admitted to the Lord's table, but that none but Baptists should be elected to office, or allowed to vote in church proceedings. This position appears to me to be very untenable. Surely the Lord's supper is not the only act of communion. If persons are admitted to the Lord's table, ought they not to be admitted to every other church privilege? But another section of Open Communionists not only admit Pædobaptists to the Lord's table, but make them eligible for office, and allow them to vote. The minister, consequently, may either be a Baptist or a Pædobaptist; or, if there be two pastors in the same congregation, there may be a pastor of each kind, so that both parties in the congregation may be suited. These I take to be the only consistent Open Communionists. Were this principle consistently carried out, it would at once lead to the union of all the small churches in the same town who hold the same views of communion into one congregation, and the distinction between Baptists, Independents, and Brethren, &c., would be lost. The fact is, the existence of two or more small churches in the same town holding open communion, implies that they differ not *on principle*, but from *dislike*, or *the love of schism*. Nothing but personal animosity or sheer ill nature can keep those apart who have no conscientious objection against uniting in the same communion. The separation of such parties is not a matter of principle, but of mere humour. This will be evident from the following statement, which I quote from *The Ballymena Observer*, about the formation of an Open Communion church in that town some two years ago:—"We have been

authorised to state," says the editor, "that the members of the religious society now in process of organisation in High-street, Ballymena, under the superintendence of the Rev. J. G. M'Vicker, do not hold all the tenets of the Plymouth Brethren; and that their church is not connected, nor intended to be connected with that body, nor with any other religious society on the face of the earth." This church, then, while professing to receive Christians of all denominations into their *own* body, refuses to be "connected with any *other* religious society on the face of the earth"! Their separation from every "other society on the face of the earth" is not a matter of *principle*, for their principle is that of free communion with all Christians; it must therefore be a matter of *caprice*. Their principles will allow them to unite with *all*, but their disposition will allow them to unite with *none*. Well, I must confess these good brethren and I differ in this. Instead of glorying that I have no connection with any religious society beyond my own church, I would rejoice in being less or more connected with every body of true Christians under heaven.

I do not mean, however, that all the churches usually denominated evangelical ought to be united in full communion under present circumstances, or that we should agree to sink differences in order to obtain such a union. This would be to purchase union at too dear a rate. No; to agree to sink differences is to enter into an ungodly confederacy to dethrone the King of Zion. We must neither give up, nor agree to keep out of sight, one iota of divine truth: but conscientiously "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." And this done in the spirit of kindness and love, is the most effectual way of bringing about the Scriptural union of the scattered sheep of Christ. When all parties, in the spirit of humility, admit the possibility of error, and with the teachableness of little children come to the Scriptures to learn the will of Christ, resolving to give up whatever is wrong, and embrace whatever is right, then we are likely to become of one mind on the poinis on which we differ, and thus we shall have a common basis of union; but a surrender of principle will never lead to a union that will yield true comfort or satisfaction. But, on the other hand, if each church look upon herself with self-complacency, assuming that she is right and all others wrong, and, consequently, that they must yield in every particular to her; but that she is to yield in no respect to them—glorying that she is what she has always been, and resolving that she will ever be the same—while this is the case, there can be neither progress in knowledge, nor approximation of churches towards each other. "We stand," says Dr. Newell, "where we *always* stood; and where stand we must, if we would be found faithful. Truth never changes; and that church which, in her separation, is nearest the truth, will change least. The others will combine and approach her gradually, and, all the while, she will appear standing still and making no progress. We can account for this by the advanced state of her testimony and her love and devotion to the truth."* Now, I frankly admit that "truth never changes." I also admit that "that church which is nearest the truth" has "least" *cause* to "change." But I am not sure that she "*will* change least," for I believe that "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan." (Con. of Faith, chap. xxv., sec. 5) Nor does the circumstance of our "standing where we always stood" prove that we are "nearest the truth," for the most erroneous church may be the most obstinate and inflexible. None were farther from the truth than the blind Pharisees, who made the Word of God of none effect by their bigoted attachment to the traditions of the ancients. (Matt. xv. 2—6.) It certainly becomes us to be very cautious in assuming that of all others we are "nearest the truth," and resolving that consequently "we will change least," and continue to "stand where we *always* stood," because if it be possible for us to be in error

* See a sermon entitled "Scriptural Unity," preached at the opening of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, in Belfast, June 29th, 1863, and published by request.

on those points about which we are so positive, then we shall find that of all others we have been most deceived. The Glasites, whose creed is as stereotyped as that of the Covenanters, and who have not changed a hair's breadth in doctrine or practice during the last hundred and fifty years, will fully endorse the doctor's sentiment, and will apply it with equal confidence to themselves; and it would be rather amusing to a third party to stand by and hear each of these denominations telling the other, "We stand where we *always* stood," &c. Each of these denominations assumes that it is "nearest the truth," and "will change least." "*We* stand where we always stood," says the Covenanter; and where stand we *must*, if we would be found faithful. Truth never changes; and that church which, in her separation, is nearest the truth, will change least." "Very true," says the Glasite; but that church which is nearest the truth is not your church, but *my* church, and on the same principle that you lift up your testimony against *my* church, I lift up my testimony against *yours*." Now, would it not be much wiser for both parties to give up the Popish doctrine of infallibility, and admit the possibility of each being mistaken in some things? For until one or other, or both parties, be brought to admit the possibility of mistake on the points in debate, it is plain there will be Covenanters and Glasites, as well as Roman Catholics, to the end of the world; and they will be as far asunder then as they are now.* For my own part, I dare not apply the principle either to myself, or the denomination with which *I am* connected; for I see much error among us which I deplore, and am convinced there is much among us, as well as in *myself*, which I have not yet seen. May the time speedily come when all denominations will resolve to lay aside former prejudices, and follow truth, wherever truth may lead them. When that time comes, each denomination, I suppose, will have some error to give up, and each will, in some measure, be indebted to the other for some truth which had been overlooked, and the *one Church of Christ* will probably differ in some things from every sect that is now on the earth. All party names will then die away. There will be no Calvinists, no Arminians, no Wesleyans; but all will be *Christians*. Some of the names by which we are now distinguished will still exist, but not as party names, for they will be applicable to all alike. All will be *Catholics* (but there will be no *Roman* Catholics), for the church will be *universal*—all will be *Episcopalians*, for the church will be watched over by *bishops*—all will be *Presbyterians*, for the church will be ruled by *elders*—all will be *Congregationalists*, for each congregation will elect its office bearers, &c. —all will be *Baptists*, for the baptism enjoined by Christ and the apostles will be acknowledged and practised by all—all will be *Strict* Baptists, for if there be no difference of opinion or practice on baptism itself, there will be no possibility of practising mixed communion†—and, all will be *Brethren*, for all will be united in the bond of brotherly love; but there will be no *Plymouth* Brethren then—but all brethren in Christ.

* It is but just to state that the Covenanters of the Eastern Reformed Synod hold much more enlightened sentiments on this subject. In a discourse delivered before that Synod, entitled "The Resolve of a Faithful Ministry," by the Rev. Hugh Stuart, also of Newtownards, whose sermon is also published by request, the following sentiment occurs:—"We fearlessly assert, that to set up any past period of the Reformation, as a model of perfection beyond which we are forbidden to venture, is the *anti-reformation* spirit; and is one of the wiles of Satan, by which he endeavours to convert the Reformation itself into a breakwater against its own further progress."

† Our Open Communion brethren must look forward to that day with some disappointment; for if their view of baptism become universal, their other favourite practice of mixed communion will become an impossibility.

THE ALABASTER BOX OF OINTMENT.

MATT. xxvi. 6—13. MARK xiv. 3—9. JOHN xii. 1—9.

THE ACCUSATION.

A GREAT sacrifice was made by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, when she "brake the box," and poured its contents upon the head and feet of the Lord Jesus. Her deed might well excite the astonishment of spectators. We need

authorised to state," says the editor, "that the members of the religious society now in process of organisation in High-street, Ballymena, under the superintendence of the Rev. J. G. M'Vicker, do not hold all the tenets of the Plymouth Brethren; and that their church is not connected, nor intended to be connected with that body, nor with any other religious society on the face of the earth." This church, then, while professing to receive Christians of all denominations into their *own* body, refuses to be "connected with any *other* religious society on the face of the earth"! Their separation from every "other society on the face of the earth" is not a matter of *principle*, for their principle is that of free communion with all Christians; it must therefore be a matter of *caprice*. Their principles will allow them to unite with *all*, but their disposition will allow them to unite with *none*. Well, I must confess these good brethren and I differ in this. Instead of glorying that I have no connection with any religious society beyond my own church, I would rejoice in being less or more connected with every body of true Christians under heaven.

I do not mean, however, that all the churches usually denominated evangelical ought to be united in full communion under present circumstances, or that we should agree to sink differences in order to obtain such a union. This would be to purchase union at too dear a rate. No; to agree to sink differences is to enter into an ungodly confederacy to dethrone the King of Zion. We must neither give up, nor agree to keep out of sight, one iota of divine truth; but conscientiously "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." And this done in the spirit of kindness and love, is the most effectual way of bringing about the Scriptural union of the scattered sheep of Christ. When all parties, in the spirit of humility, admit the possibility of error, and with the teachableness of little children come to the Scriptures to learn the will of Christ, resolving to give up whatever is wrong, and embrace whatever is right, then we are likely to become of one mind on the poinis on which we differ, and thus we shall have a common basis of union; but a surrender of principle will never lead to a union that will yield true comfort or satisfaction. But, on the other hand, if each church look upon herself with self-complacency, assuming that she is right and all others wrong, and, consequently, that they must yield in every particular to her; but that she is to yield in no respect to them—glorying that she is what she has always been, and resolving that she will ever be the same—while this is the case, there can be neither progress in knowledge, nor approximation of churches towards each other. "We stand," says Dr. Newell, "where we *always* stood; and where stand we must, if we would be found faithful. Truth never changes; and that church which, in her separation, is nearest the truth, will change least. The others will combine and approach her gradually, and, all the while, she will appear standing still and making no progress. We can account for this by the advanced state of her testimony and her love and devotion to the truth."* Now, I frankly admit that "truth never changes." I also admit that "that church which is nearest the truth" has "least" *cause* to "change." But I am not sure that she "*will* change least," for I believe that "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan." (Con. of Faith, chap. xxv., sec. 5) Nor does the circumstance of our "standing where we always stood" prove that we are "nearest the truth," for the most erroneous church may be the most obstinate and inflexible. None were farther from the truth than the blind Pharisees, who made the Word of God of none effect by their bigoted attachment to the traditions of the ancients. (Matt. xv. 2—6.) It certainly becomes us to be very cautious in assuming that of all others we are "nearest the truth," and resolving that consequently "we will change least," and continue to "stand where we *always* stood," because if it be possible for us to be in error

* See a sermon entitled "Scriptural Unity," preached at the opening of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, in Belfast, June 29th, 1863, and published by request.

on those points about which we are so positive, then we shall find that of all others we have been most deceived. The Glasites, whose creed is as stereotyped as that of the Covenanters, and who have not changed a hair's breadth in doctrine or practice during the last hundred and fifty years, will fully endorse the doctor's sentiment, and will apply it with equal confidence to themselves; and it would be rather amusing to a third party to stand by and hear each of these denominations telling the other, "We stand where we *always* stood," &c. Each of these denominations assumes that it is "nearest the truth," and "will change least." "*We* stand where we always stood," says the Covenanter; and where stand we *must*, if we would be found faithful. Truth never changes; and that church which, in her separation, is nearest the truth, will change least." "Very true," says the Glasite; but that church which is nearest the truth is not your church, but *my* church, and on the same principle that you lift up your testimony against *my* church, I lift up my testimony against *yours*." Now, would it not be much wiser for both parties to give up the Popish doctrine of infallibility, and admit the possibility of each being mistaken in some things? For until one or other, or both parties, be brought to admit the possibility of mistake on the points in debate, it is plain there will be Covenanters and Glasites, as well as Roman Catholics, to the end of the world; and they will be as far asunder then as they are now.* For my own part, I dare not apply the principle either to myself, or the denomination with which *I am* connected; for I see much error among us which I deplore, and am convinced there is much among us, as well as in *myself*, which I have not yet seen. May the time speedily come when all denominations will resolve to lay aside former prejudices, and follow truth, wherever truth may lead them. When that time comes, each denomination, I suppose, will have some error to give up, and each will, in some measure, be indebted to the other for some truth which had been overlooked, and the *one Church of Christ* will probably differ in some things from every sect that is now on the earth. All party names will then die away. There will be no Calvinists, no Arminians, no Wesleyans; but all will be *Christians*. Some of the names by which we are now distinguished will still exist, but not as party names, for they will be applicable to all alike. All will be *Catholics* (but there will be no *Roman* Catholics), for the church will be *universal*—all will be *Episcopalians*, for the church will be watched over by *bishops*—all will be *Presbyterians*, for the church will be ruled by *elders*—all will be *Congregationalists*, for each congregation will elect its office bearers, &c.—all will be *Baptists*, for the baptism enjoined by Christ and the apostles will be acknowledged and practised by all—all will be *Strict* Baptists, for if there be no difference of opinion or practice on baptism itself, there will be no possibility of practising mixed communion†—and, all will be *Brethren*, for all will be united in the bond of brotherly love; but there will be no *Plymouth* Brethren then—but all brethren in Christ.

* It is but just to state that the Covenanters of the Eastern Reformed Synod hold much more enlightened sentiments on this subject. In a discourse delivered before that Synod, entitled "The Resolve of a Faithful Ministry," by the Rev. Hugh Stuart, also of Newtownards, whose sermon is also published by request, the following sentiment occurs:—"We fearlessly assert, that to set up any past period of the Reformation, as a model of perfection beyond which we are forbidden to venture, is the *anti-reformation* spirit; and is one of the wiles of Satan, by which he endeavours to convert the Reformation itself into a breakwater against its own further progress."

† Our Open Communion brethren must look forward to that day with some disappointment; for if their view of baptism become universal, their other favourite practice of mixed communion will become an impossibility.

THE ALABASTER BOX OF OINTMENT.

MATT. xxvi. 6—13. MARK xiv. 3—9. JOHN xii. 1—9.

THE ACCUSATION.

A GREAT sacrifice was made by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, when she "brake the box," and poured its contents upon the head and feet of the Lord Jesus. Her deed might well excite the astonishment of spectators. We need

scarcely be surprised that they condemned it as a thoughtless waste. Were the question asked, "Was Mary excusable?" the unhesitating reply would doubtless be, "Verily we do not blame." Were it inquired, "Must the condemnation of the disciples be reprobated as unjust?" the answer would be, "Even so." But let us not indulge a spirit of self-complacency, or form any invidious comparison, or rather contrast, between what the disciples did, and what we may suppose we should have done in their case. View the deed of the woman,—not by the light of approval afforded by Jesus,—but from the stand point of the disciples, and their judgment wears the aspect of much plausibility. "*Why is this waste of the ointment made, for it might have been sold for three hundred pence,*" (about £9 sterling) "*and have been given to the poor?*" To waste anything, is to devote it to a purpose without the probability of securing a tangible and proportionate good. Money cast into the sea, or invested in any unfortunate speculation, or employed to secure costly entertainment for a wayward fancy or a transient feeling, is waste! So the spectators thought. Readily they perceived and acknowledged in their heart, "This perfume might delight the nostrils of a king, but it will depart in a few seconds; and what a price she must have paid for it! She ought to be, and must be, reproved." How much might be done in behalf of the poor by that sum, and what a need exists! The hungry need bread, the naked need clothing, the homeless need shelter, and the sick need medicine. What an urgent cry for practical sympathy proceeds from the orphan, the widow, the maimed, and the halt, and the blind! To aid them would secure the approbation of all the good and the wise; but to neglect would be to despise the blessing of the destitute, sorrowful, and suffering, which descends upon the generous soul as the benediction of Heaven! How many such suppliants for succour were to be met in every street. Did not the law, the prophets, the life of Him "who went about doing good," enjoin them to pity and relieve the indigent? These considerations, which bear a generous aspect, prompted the impassioned censure.

The whole of the disciples, with one exception, evidently believed themselves the advocates of genuine benevolence. If they expressed their sentiments with warmth, it was out of the fulness of affection towards others. The chief speaker (and he was the exception) was moved by other feelings and motives—"He cared not for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein!" A very different judgment must be formed of Iscariot, on the one hand, and of the disciples, on the other. He was moved by *avarice*—a supreme regard to paltry pelf. We may, therefore, imagine something of his indignancy at the thought that he had just failed to obtain for his own private use three hundred pence! The cries of the poor, if they entered his ear, never reached his sympathy; but to see a heap of gold vanishing away in richest odours, pierced the apple of his eye, and, as a fiery arrow, entered his heart! But this indignancy was just like him! To imagine that he could have *said* or *acted* otherwise, would be to suppose him chargeable with the most unnatural and monstrous affectation. For a few hours afterward, as if to make amends to himself for the loss he sustained in the house of Simon the leper, he sold his Master to the Jewish authorities, and, to finish the bargain, gave himself to the devil! On the part of Judas there was *shameless hypocrisy*. He professed sympathy which he did not feel. It would not have suited his purpose to make known his true motive, for that would not only have made him the object of censure but of execration. Sin often, if not invariably, needs a fair guise; and so he professed a supreme and very tender regard to others. Nor could he harbour within his breast one sin without calling to his aid another, and that, if possible, even more exceeding sinful. The true disciples needed not such pious pretences. Neither avarice nor dissimulation was their besetting sin. Whatever may have been their infirmities—and these were not few—it would appear that they were wholly free from the transgressions on which God's heaviest curses rest. Their words of reproof proceeded not only from an erring but from a generous and sincere heart! Without the avarice, the

hypocrisy, the adamantine heart of Judas, they were imposed upon by his subtlety. The fact of such an imposition is not without its uses. It may serve to show that the loudest and most impassioned protestations of regard to what is good in itself, may spring from the most selfish and criminal motives! We may learn that even the pure in heart may, for a season, become the dupes and unwitting tools of the designing and hypocritical.

THE VINDICATION.

The charge urged against Mary was plausible, but nothing more. That she acted a froward and prodigal part was doubtless apparent to the most superficial observers; but only to them. Well was it that her deed was not left to their judgment. She could leave her justification to Him whom she so strongly loved, and so devotedly served, and it was satisfactory enough to know that he did approve. It was meet that when Mary, who had on a previous occasion sat at her Master's feet, met with him in the house of Simon, she should render to him a signal token of her devotedness. Was he not her Saviour and her God? Extraordinary occasions and persons demand extraordinary honour, service, and sacrifice. Who so honourable and deserving as the Lord Jesus? What comparable to His excellency of character? for he was the undefiled one; or to the dignity of his person? for "he was the brightness of his Father's glory;" or to the grandeur of his station? for he was "the Mediator"—the Head over all principality and power; or to the greatness of his achievements? for he was destined to deliver his people from the powers of earth, and death, and hell! Or what could be likened to his royal gifts? when he bestows upon his "sacramental hosts" thrones, and crowns, universal dominion, and endless life! He was a rare guest, and of this the Lord Jesus failed not to remind his disciples—"Me ye have not always." He could only stay in the house of the leper for a few hours, for his "hour" had well nigh come! The opportunity—and the final one—was presented to Mary when she might render to her Lord a wealthy homage, and she used it. She could attend to the poor afterwards. Censorious disciples condemned, and, with shocked feelings, murmured, "a great waste;" but He, who knew her heart, said, "*She hath wrought a good work upon me.*" Had the sacrifice been a myriadfold more costly, O Jesus, it would yet have been infinitely below thy worth! If we are bound to others by the ties of human pity, we are doubly bound to the Beloved by the golden chain of deepest and endless gratitude and love!

"Let everlasting glories crown
Thy head, my Saviour and my God!
Thy hands have brought salvation down,
And writ the blessings in thy Word."

"*She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.*" She doubtless brought forth the most costly box she had—poured the ointment upon the person of the Son of man in no stinted measure—made the sacrifice with the utmost alacrity and gladness, and then wept because she could make no greater. She thus (though doubtless without having such a design) gave to Him an anointing for his burial! What more could she do? Are not the claims of Jesus the same now? And are not we summoned to emulate her conduct? Though we see Him not as he appeared in the days of his flesh with the eye of sense, we may yet behold, and love and serve him, by the exercise of faith. We may honour Him by a greater and more habitual regard to his Word, his people, and his cause! For these all we are and have are required. The arguments for such an unreserved surrender are numerous and irresistible! By the blood which hath redeemed us—by the knowledge that we are not our own—by the uncertain and brief tenure of life—by the vanishing show of the present world, and the "powers of the world to come," we are admonished to give our supreme thought, affection, and efforts, to Him who hath redeemed us unto God. Let us glory in the cross of Christ as the

source of pardon, purity, and strength; and, through the grace of the Mediator, "do what we can;" and our ability for receiving and communicating good will be increased, we shall become thrice blessed in blessing others, and the smile of divine complacency and delight will be our endless reward. *The deed of "the woman" was destined to become immortal.* The disciples believed that when Mary brake "the box" and poured the precious liquid on the head and feet of Jesus, the odours which ascended would, in fewest moments, pass away. This was their error. Like the memory of the righteous, the deed was designed to be held in "everlasting remembrance." The odours of this goodly "alabaster box" have not yet departed from earth; they fill the glorious temple of the church, and shall do to the end of time. *Look upon the sacrifice of the devoted one as a symbol of one greater and infinitely more acceptable.* Spectators, with one exception, could only see the external aspect, and knew not, or only very imperfectly, the sacredness of her grief, the purity of her design, and strength of her affection. She poured the pure nard upon the head of Jesus. What a declaration of her will to honour Him! She washed His feet with the same precious liquid, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and in what more significant manner could she indicate the profundity of her humility? She gave her whole self—her own broken, lowly, and loving heart—amidst the richer perfumes of holy sorrow and adoring love. The one grand lesson afforded is of unspeakable worth to the awakened one,—to the believer mourning over his infirmities and spiritual declensions,—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Grahamstown. R. H. Brotherton.

Poetry.

PASSING AWAY.

"Passing away!" so whispers the wind,
As it treads its trackless course;
And "Passing away," doth the bright rill say,
As it leaps from its crystal source—
All "passing away," on the stream of time,
To oblivion's vale, in a far-off clime:
Matter and man, we make no delay—
To eternity's gulf we are passing away.

"Passing away!" Mark the furrowed brow,
And the head with its silvery hair,
And the pale wan cheek—how they plainly speak
That they're leaving a world of care.
Yes, passing away. Even beauty's flower
Is fading fast 'neath the spoiler's power;
And fair and frail to their bed of clay,
Adown to the tomb they're passing away.

"Passing away!" moans the ocean's wave,
As it breaks on the beaten shore,
And the tortured tide is left to chide
The cliffs with their hollow roar.
Ay, passing away! both from palace and cot
The places which know us, will soon know us not;
Whether peasant or prince, nature's last debt to pay,
At the fiat of God, we are passing away.

"Passing away!" for their hour is past—
Earth's riches are a motley pyre:
The monarch's throne, and his sword and crown,
And the pen and the poet's lyre,
All passing away! E'en the pomp of art,
And the pride of the despot must all depart,
And the relics of realms must each decay,
And the names of the nations be passing away.

"Passing away!" Even Time himself
Bends under his load of years;
His limbs are frail, and his cheeks grow pale
With the furrows of sorrowing tears;
With his broken scythe, with a silent tread,
He's passing on to the home of the dead;
With a bending form, and with locks grown gray,
Old Time himself is passing away.

"Passing away!" All but God's bright throne,
And his servants' home above,
And his grace divine, and the boundless mine
Of God's eternal love;
And his will to save, through a Saviour's blood,
The child of faith who hath washed in the flood;
Even earth to its framework doth all decay,
But God in his love shall ne'er pass away.

Page for the Young.

THE BLACK SPOT.

One day a man suddenly thought to himself, "I would like very much to eat an apple." So he went to the basket containing a large number, and picked out the largest, finest-looking one among them. Seating himself again in his chair, he looked at it and said, "Who ever saw a finer apple than that? Large, red as the cheek, and bright as the eye of a little girl. Not a spot or defect on it."

By this time his knife was ready, and off came a slice large enough for a good mouthful, and, lo! the whole inside of this beautiful apple was black and bitter! "Now," said he, "this is too bad! But I know that this apple did not become bad all at once. First, there was a little spot in the centre, and it began to work out, and out, and out. By and by one half of the apple was spoiled, and at length it was nothing but one mass of bitterness and blackness, covered up with a beautiful skin."

Now, I have sometimes seen groups of beautiful children! Such eyes, and such merry, prattling tongues! And then I have opened the Bible—and what do you think I read there? "The heart"—that is, the human heart, man's heart, woman's heart, children's hearts, all hearts—"the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Oh, what a black spot on every, every heart!

"But, may be," says Hettie, "may be it will not grow any bigger." Ah! but it will! It is growing bigger all the time. And what awful work it makes when it has polluted everything within!

There was once a sweet little baby, and, as he lay on his mother's knee, she thought he was so beautiful and lovely! Years after I saw a most wretched looking man. His clothes were ragged and filthy; his face was red and bloated; he could hardly walk, and as he staggered along he muttered curses and blasphemies! Oh, children, this man was that sweet little baby grown up! And the black spot had done it all!

Some time ago a man crept into the bedroom at midnight where an old man slept, and killed him! It was

the black spot in the heart that was the cause.

In the prison you may find men, women, and children. Some have been sent there for stealing, some for fighting, and others for other crimes —but the black spot in the heart is at the bottom of all.

All the swearing and drunkenness, all the gambling and Sabbath-breaking, all the lying and cheating in the world, come from this black spot in the heart.

Yes, and all the anguish in the pit of woe among lost souls comes from the same source.

Children, that spot is in your heart. Every cross word you speak comes from it; every act of disobedience or disrespect to your parents; all dislike of your Bible, or the Sabbath, or prayer, comes from it.

Do you wish that spot to grow and grow until it covers all your heart, and pollutes all within you? If not, it must be taken away. Who can take it away? Jesus, by his Spirit. Ask Him; pray to him. Give your heart to Him, and he will make it pure and holy. Those who keep this spot till they die, go down among the devils; those who have it taken away, go up among the angels. Whither do you wish to go?—*Sabbath School Visitor.*

A PARABLE.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."—Jer. viii. 20.

It was spring. A little seed lay in the warm ground. In the air above, the birds sang their spring songs. The green grass began to clothe the earth with its spring raiment. It was the time of nature's great revival.

To this little seed God sent messengers.—His sun with gentle warmth irradiated it, saying, "Burst into life, little seed; burst into life." His warm rains fell upon its hiding place, saying, "Burst into life, little seed."

"To-morrow," said the little seed; "to-morrow."

To-morrow came. And again the warm sun renewed its kind message, and the spring rain its invitation unto life; and again the seed replied, "to-morrow."

So passed May. Every day brought a new invitation. Every day was marked by new delay.

June came and went. July the rain no longer fell. The sun still shone, but upon an earth hard and dry by reason of the summer heat.

Then at length the seed awoke from its inaction. "Now," it said, "I will begin to live. Now I will bring forth germ, stalk, leaf, and blossom."

But now no rain fell to supply its thirst. No sun tenderly warmed it into life. The life-giving period had passed, and the little seed had died, murmuring sadly, "Too late! too late."

To you, dear reader, God's invitations come as oft-repeated as the raindrops in the spring showers. Upon your heart the radiance of a Saviour's love shines inviting to eternal life. To minister, to friend, to Saviour, and to God, your answer is ever the same—"To-morrow, to-morrow."

But it will not be always spring. God's Spirit shall not always strive with man. The heart long shone on by God's love, but never answering it with upspringing life, grows hard and dry. And the soul which often says "To-morrow," at length cries sadly, "Too late! too late!"—*British Messenger.*

Correspondence.

PASTORS AND LIFE INSURANCE.

To the Editors of the Primitive Church Magazine.

Gentlemen,—Referring to a communication in the September number of the "Primitive Church," from Mr. Webb, of Eynsford, on the Insurance of the lives of the pastors of our churches, may I remind him, and, perhaps some brethren in the same condition as the late Mr. Pells, that the National Society for the Relief of Aged and Infirm Ministers and their Families, offers a cheap and easy way of averting such cases as Mr. Webb deplores. Only £1 1s. is

required from the pastor, and £2 2s. per annum from the church or other friends, to secure all the benefits of membership. It is by far the cheapest insurance which can be effected by my brethren. I would earnestly urge this on their attention. It will be safe, and, in case of their death, supply the widows and children with a fixed annual sum. I am sure that either of the secretaries at Birmingham will be glad to supply information to any applicant. I have no beneficiary interest in it.

Yours affectionately,

B. Evans.

[We are happy to know that the late Mr. Pells was a member of the society to which Dr. Evans alludes. —Eds.]

Reviews.

Two Years After and Onwards; or, The Approaching War amongst the Powers of Europe, and other Future Events, described as Foretold in Scripture Prophecy. By the Author of "The Coming Struggle." Cloth, pp. 193. London: Houlston and Wright, 65, Paternoster-row.

We are not among those who denounce all efforts to ascertain the import of unfulfilled prophecy. When the book of Revelation was first written, and when *every* prophecy contained in it had yet to receive its accomplishment, these words were uttered by God, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." (Rev. i. 3.) Surely, then, we are as likely to realise this blessing *now*, if we properly seek it, seeing that we have the benefit of much that is already fulfilled in helping us to understand that which is yet future. The larger portion of the book is explained by accomplishment: this should enable us better to understand the rest. Besides, *all* Scripture, unfulfilled prophecy included, is profitable, &c. (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) But no testimony can profit us, except so far as we understand it.

Special qualifications, however, are required in the man who would be our guide in such investigations. He should know how to keep imagination rigidly in check; should have an eminent development of the critical faculty; should be deeply versed in secular and ecclesiastical history; and, above all, should be animated by an overwhelming reverence for the Divine Record, and should be possessed of a thorough, accurate, and enlightened acquaintance with the whole range of its teachings.

Does the author of "Two Years After and Onwards" possess all these attributes? We fear not. He is evidently a devout Christian, and loves to glorify his Lord. A godly pious spirit breathes in all his pages. His soul is in full sympathy with his theme. His style, too, is clear, interesting, and popular. The book allures you on, so that, after you have begun it, you must read it through. But the imagination has too free play; the criticism is often faulty; and the interpretation palpably erroneous.

To follow the writer through all his steps, would require a volume. In our limited space we can only point to one or two particulars.

He denies in *toto* that the world is to be converted to God by the gospel and the Holy Spirit (p. 27), or, as he expresses it, "by moral influence." John's second beast, with the two horns, he affirms to be the Austrian power (p. 40), whereas it clearly points to the Papacy, and especially to the miracle-working *Popish priesthood* claiming a double power, temporal and spiritual, for the Pope. (Elliott. Horæ Apoc. Vol. 3, p. 177.) Daniel's little horn, mentioned 8th chapter, 9th verse, this writer identifies with the Mohammedan Antichrist! while nothing can be more apparent than its fulfilment in Antiochus Epiphanes. In one place (p. 68) our author explains the hook in the jaws of Gog (Ezek. xxxviii. 4) as predicting the check which Russia received in the Crimean war! But, farther on, this

marvellous book receives quite another exposition, and is conjured into "the bait which draws Russia in the direction of Judea." (P. 137.) Christ is to appear *personally* for the destruction of Antichrist (pp. 149, 177), which is a virtual confession that the Holy Ghost will fail in his office as "the convincer of the world." Miraculous interpositions, strictly so called, are to be revived, the ordinary operations of Divine Providence as at present administered being found inadequate to the proposed end. (P. 151.) This is affirmed, too, in the face of the wonders which have been already achieved in the direction of an accomplishment of all that God has predicted. The great French Revolution of 1789 and following years, the wars of Napoleon, the decay or drying up of the Mohammedan power, the wonderful campaigns of Garibaldi, the virtual annihilation of the power of the Papacy in all Italy, the Franco-Italian convention which provides for the complete evacuation of Rome by the French in the ominous year of 1866—all these majestic steps in the direction of a complete fulfilment of the prophetic word, have been brought about without any *strictly* miraculous interposition. To achieve the rest in precisely the same way will be just as easy to the Almighty, and will be in strict accordance with the words of the Eternal One, "the ten horns shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will," &c. (Rev. xvii. 15—18.)

The author of the book before us asserts that "the end of the world" merely means the end of the *antichristian* world; and "the day of judgment" is the day of the judgment of Christendom, and excludes the heathen nations altogether! (pp. 156, 157) statements which are obviously mutually destructive; for are not the heathen nations a part of the antichristian world, seeing that now in all of them the gospel has been long preached for a witness?

Our author is a most enthusiastic millenarian, but he evidently feels the force of much that has been urged against the doctrine of "the personal reign." By his admissions he involves himself in inextricable confusion; in fact, he gets into a perfect jumble. He admits that there will be *death* during the millennium. (P. 187.) But the saints raised at the appearing of the Lord, and the living saints then changed, are never to die: they are to live through the thousand years. At the same time, "the nations who are to be the subjects of Christ's kingdom, and ruled over by the saints, will, it appears, live according to nature, and at length die of age," &c. (P. 187.) Now, we ask, will those nations be really converted, or not? If not, then this author's millennium dwindles down to a mere mockery; it becomes simply a worldly kingdom, existing that the saints may be its nabobs! This is all you can make of such a millennium, any how! And is the Lord to come from heaven, and to set aside existing agencies, for no higher result than this? But suppose that our author should admit that the major part of these "subjects of Christ's kingdom" will be really saints. Then we have the church of God rent in twain during the whole of the millennium; part living for ever, and part dying "according to nature"! What a schism in the Lord's one body! And the saints who will die during this epoch will go to heaven in their disembodied spirits, not to find Christ *there*, for the theory is, he will be reigning on *the earth*. His *bodily* presence will then be not in heaven, but here below. Two opposing currencies will be in force on earth during this whole period, one a dispensation of life, and the other of death; and the "holy Catholic Church," for which the Saviour died, will be part under one dispensation, part under the other. Who *can* believe this?

Moreover, our author tells us, that the final and general judgment "will not be universal." It will not extend to the immortals of the millennial epoch, but only to all the wicked, and the good people who have died during the millennium. Here again we have the seamless robe of our Lord cut in two. Fancy the one elect, redeemed, and sanctified church *divided* in the

hour of judgment! (Pp. 187—189.) Part of this mighty host are to be judged and finally accepted at one period, and part at another, and one part are to sit as assessors with Christ in judgment upon the other! In view of such theories we ask indignantly, *Is Christ divided?*

These are some of the points on which we utterly dissent from our author. We pass over his fanciful picturings of the scene and method of the coming struggle. He may be wrong; he may be right; the result must settle this. All we say is, that the author has drawn quite as largely upon his own imagination as he has upon the teachings of Holy Scripture for the anticipations in which he indulges.

In the main we think that, the expounders of the Revelation who point us to the year 1866 as a critical one in the history of Europe and the world are correct. What a strange fact it is that the Franco-Italian Convention, concluded since the book we are reviewing was written, provides for the final and complete evacuation of Rome by the French troops in the year 1866! Has the French Emperor been studying prophecy as expounded in England? Has he waded through the four learned volumes of Elliott's Horæ Apocalypticæ; or has he contented himself with the lighter and more ephemeral productions of Cumming, which are Elliott abridged and popularised? Be that as it may, he is clearly paving the way for the fulfilment of God's counsel. With solemn awe, and yet with unwavering faith, we wait the events of 1866.

In concluding this review we would enter our protest against such a method of dealing with prophecy as would bring that department of Revelation into contempt. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the bulwarks of the Christian evidences. Let us not in any way diminish its strength by extravagancy and indiscretion in dealing with the yet undeveloped future. God *may*, for ought we know, put the finishing stroke to the Franco-Italian Convention by the destruction of the city of Rome by subterranean and volcanic action. The 18th chapter of Revelation has clearly not yet been fulfilled. It points to a sudden destruction (18—21), and to an utter and final one, like that which has befallen Nineveh and Babylon (21—24). Manifestly this is a yet future event. *What a solution it would afford to all the difficulties of the Italian question!* Geologists tell us that Rome is built upon the crater of a slumbering volcano. All the aspects of the country betoken this most clearly. Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried by an eruption of Vesuvius, *though previously that volcano had been quiet for centuries.* In fact, the Romans do not seem to have known it to be a volcano, though Pompeii was actually paved with its lava. Yet it broke out again after a rest of hundreds of years, and Pompeii, and Herculaneum, and Stabiæ, perished! *When* Rome is thus to disappear we know not, but prophecy and science both agree in anticipating such an event. We leave the future with the God of all, assured that Antichrist in every form shall perish!

The Early English Baptists. Vol. II. By B. Evans, D.D. London: J. Heaton and Son. Pp. 348.

This volume is the last issued by the Bunyan Library. It was a happy thought of Mr. Heaton to commence the publication of this series of works, in all of which Baptists are more or less specially interested. We trust that the enterprising publisher will meet with the encouragement which the sterling value, the excellent getting up, and the marvellous cheapness of this library deserve. Every Baptist should subscribe to the Bunyan Library.

The first volume of "The Early English Baptists," which appeared as the seventh book of the series, began with the first glimpses of Baptist sentiment in the ecclesiastical history of England, and took us down to the death of James the First, the pedantic jester and buffoon. The second volume, with which we are now presented, resumes the narrative, and carries us through the stirring periods of Charles the First, the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Charles the

Second. The line of Baptist principles is clearly traced through this scroll of history, while the general features, and personages, and incidents of the times, are succinctly but graphically sketched. Our brother Evans has brought to the task special qualifications for its execution. With the exception of Edward Bean Underhill, there is perhaps no other man among us who could have produced such a history of the Early English Baptists. Dr. Evans has made this subject his peculiar study for many years past. His own library is rich in materials calculated to throw light upon the spirit and doings of our venerable forefathers. It would gratify us exceedingly to hear that Dr. Evans had undertaken to prepare a full and complete history of the Baptists of Great Britain. Relieved, as he is, of pastoral work, it would be a worthy theme for his able pen. We trust he will think of this hint. Should he act upon it, we promise him our most cordial support.

Would that we could persuade all our young people thoroughly to master the two volumes which Dr. Evans has given us as a contribution to the history of our ecclesiastical ancestors! The prayerful study of these books would be eminently calculated to foster among us a high conscientiousness, a fervent devotedness, and a sublime self-sacrifice for Christ. The religion of the present day is too generally a tame, yielding, undecided thing. It lacks bone and muscle. It is of weak fibre. Familiarity with the heroic deeds of our spiritual sires would tend to impart a more manly and decided tone to our piety, and conscience would be braced up to "all good fidelity in all things." We most heartily commend Dr. Evans's two volumes to the attention of all our readers.

Report of Strict Baptist Mission for 1864. London: J. Briscoe, Banner-street, Finsbury.

THIS is a mission conducted on the plan of direct management by the churches contributing. Much attention has recently been drawn to the working of our missionary organisations. The frequency with which changes are advocated in the constitution of our old Foreign Mission, proves that the system which has so long prevailed is not satisfactory. In the Report before us we have a very temperate and intelligent plea for return to the system of *missions controlled directly by the churches which sustain them.* The spirit of the document is admirable. We commend it to the thoughtful examination of those who are anxious to follow the precedents of the apostolic churches.

The Sunday School Teachers' Commentary on the New Testament. No. 6. By E. R. CONDER, M.A. E. Stock. WE have already spoken in very high terms of this work. It is progressing satisfactorily; but we fear that it will prove rather too bulky for its professed object, if the author does not get on more rapidly.

The Lighted Way; or, Loving Words about Jesus. By Cousin BESSIE. London: H. J. Tresidder, 17, Ave Maria-lane, E.C. Cloth. Pp. 128. ONE of the best books for children that we have read. It sets the gospel before them in a most attractive form. All mothers should purchase this book and read it to their little ones, and the young folks should read it for themselves. It will make a capital Christmas present.

Stories for Sunday Scholars. Milly's New Year. No. 1. Pp. 12. Price One Penny. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster-row.

"MILLY'S New Year" is the first story of an intended series to be published monthly. If all the rest are of equal interest with this they must be popular. For ourselves, we confess to a strong liking for a good child's story, and this is one of the best of its class. It will make a very attractive present or reward book for Sunday scholars and other children. It is specially suitable for Christmas or New Year's Day. Our young friends who have a penny to spare, cannot do better with it than buy "Milly's New Year." The book has an ornamental wrapper, and is illustrated with a very pretty picture.

Intelligence.

MINISTERIAL CHANGE.

BACUP, LANCASHIRE. — The Rev. Joseph Greves Hall, of Rochdale, has accepted the cordial and unanimous invitation of the church meeting in Irwell-terrace Baptist Chapel, to become its pastor, and intends commencing his labours on the first Sunday in January next.

DEATH.

DIED, November 2nd, Mary, the beloved wife of Mr. Edward James Oliver, of Chatham-place, Walworth, in the 63rd year of her age. She was the eldest daughter of the late Rev. John Chin, of Sion-street, Walworth, and was baptised by him when about seventeen years of age, being called to the knowledge of the truth in early life. She was married to her now bereaved husband (who, with her children, deeply deplore her loss) in April, 1833, and her life as a wife and mother, as well as in the more public spheres of Christian usefulness, was one consistent course of devotedness to the Redeemer's cause. In February, 1856, she was stricken down with paralysis, and from that time, until October 9th of the present year, she suffered from repeated attacks of the same disease. On that day she had been taken twice to Walworth-road Chapel, and much enjoyed there the presence of her Lord and Saviour, but when about to retire to rest she was seized with another stroke, from which she never rallied. But though her sufferings during this closing affliction were very severe, her mind was peaceful and happy. She longed to be with Christ, and often said, "Home! home!" For about twenty hours previous to her departure she was wholly unconscious, then sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, and was interred at Nunhead Cemetery, November 8th.

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